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A LETTER from a True Dutchman to his Friend,

Exhibiting the Reaſons why the Confederates ought to refuſe the Peace, which is now offered to them by France.

Done out of French.

SIR,

IT was about this time Twelvemonth that I wrote concerning the Peace which the *French* King did then offer to the *Allies*. You know the Reaſons which I then brought to demonſtrate the danger of accepting the ſame, *viz.* That the Deſign of that Crown was firſt to break the Union amongſt the Princes, who had leagu'd themſelves againſt *France* for their own Preſervation; and then to accompliſh the entire ruine of all the States in *Chriſtendom*, And now that at preſent the *French* King inſiſts more than ever upon demanding a Peace, which he could never obtain ſince the preſent War; which I hope never ſhall, upon any other Conditions, than thoſe of the Treaties of *Munſter*, and the *Pyrenees*. I find my ſelf obliged to entertain you again with this Subject, and to diſcover the *Fatal Snare* which the *French* King lays for us.

I ſhall not trouble you, *Sir*, with the Reaſons that I formerly hinted, for I have others of greater Weight to Communicate, which will effectually prove that the Diſhonourable Peace which the *French* King does now offer, is not a Real Peace, and that if the ſame be accepted, it will certainly iſſue in the Ruine of this *State*, the *Emperour*, *Princes of the Empire*, and other *Soveraigns*; and in a word, will Terminate in the *Deſolation* of *Chriſtendom* and the *Slavery* of all *Europe*.

To ſet this Truth in its full Light, we muſt conſider in the firſt place, what it is that the *French* King propoſed to himſelf by Attacking his Neighbours unjuſtly, and the pernicious Method which he made uſe of for that end. And in the next place, Let us conſider the Motives which prevail'd with the *Confederates*, to enter into ſuch a ſtrick Alliance againſt *France*: And then let's Examine whether thoſe Motives have not the ſame Reaſon now which they had then, both as to the one and the other, that is to ſay, whether the *French* King hath chang'd his Conduct and Deſigns? And whether the *Allies* have as yet put him out of a Condition to diſturb the Repoſe of *Europe*, or Re-attempt the breach of Treaties.

As to the firſt, It is evident that the Ultimate end of all the *French* Deſigns is the Univerſal Monarchy to which their boundleſs Ambition hath made them aſpire now for ſome time: This needs no proof, the matter ſpeaks of it ſelf, and every body is fully convinced of it; Only we ſhall obſerve here, that this great Project was form'd during the Miniſtry of *Cardinal Richlieu*, and we ſhall now take a ſhort view of all the Infamous Methods which have been made uſe of by the *French*, to accompliſh their deſign from that time to this very day.

It was then that famous Miniſter who (while he applyed himſelf to weaken the Houſe of *Auſtria*, by the bloody Wars which he induſtriouſly fomented in the Empire) did lay the Foundation of this Important Deſign, by the taking of *Rochelle* and other places then Poſſeſſed by the *Proteſtants*. After the Death of this Cardinal, *Mazarin* his Succeſſor carried on the Deſign, by *depriving the People of their* Liberty, *the Parliament of their Rights and Priviledges*, and *the Nobility and Gentry of their Credit and Authority*. The *French* King by this means being rais'd above the Law, he became Abſolute Maſter of the Lives and Eſtates of all his Subjects, ſo that without any Obſtacle he impoſed what Taxes he pleaſed upon them, and rendred himſelf Maſter of vaſt Sums, which he hath imployed ſince in the Execution of his Ambitious Deſigns.

All Letts and Impediments being removed out of the way at Home, his Business was not to surmount the Difficulties from abroad, and to compass his design, he found it necessary to divide those Potentates whom he intended to subdue, and to bring some of them over to his side, while he should swallow up others: Part of this he did effectuate by his *Leud'dors*, and the rest he brought about by his Unfaithfulness, Cunning and Treachery; but let us particularly take a view of the Operation, which these different Methods have had since the Coronation of *Charles* II. King of *England*. That Prince was hardly well seated on his Throne, when *France* prevail'd with him to make War against *Holland*, with a design not only to weaken the *Dutch*, but also the *English*. This War was followed by that betwixt the *French* and *Spainard*, the Former taking away many places from the Latter in the *Netherlands*, under the unjust pretence of the Queen of *Frances* Right of Succession.

Those Troubles were no sooner appeas'd by the Mediation of other Potentates, and especially that of the *States General*; when the *French* Kings Ambition rais'd up new ones, by the Rupture of the Treaty of *Aix La Chapelle*, and the War of 1672. It was chiefly upon the *Dutch* that *France* had an evil Eye; looking upon them as the greatest Obstacle of their unjust designs, and having Sworn their Ruine: The *French* K. was so dexterous to bring over the K. *England* and the Bishop of *Munster* to his Party, after he had Corrupted by his Gold, those who were in chief trust in *Holland*, and found powerful Factions against the Family of *Orange*. The *Hollanders* were at that time secure, reposing themselves upon the Public's Faith of the Treaty, and were wholly taken up with their Commerce, when on a sudden those Three Powers did fall in upon them, and without the particular Assistance of Heav'n they had been infallibly ruined. But seeing you know what were the Consequences of that dangerous War; it's needless to repeat them: only I shall observe that it was the Cause of the Prince of *Oranges* being Restored to the Dignity of his Ancestors against the mind of the *French* King, who would have had him brought under, and that this happy Restoration was also the safety of the *State*. And here I cannot omit to make you sensible of the great mistake which the *Dutch* made, they knew the ill design which *France* had upon them, and had just smarted under the Effects of it, they were not ignorant of the *French* Kings Unfaithfulness, his Tricks, and his Cabals. Yet, nevertheless tho' they were but just delivered from the Brink of Ruine, by the Valour and Safe Conduct of the *Prince*; they were cheated with false appearances, and clapt up a Peace against the Mind of their Illustrious *Stadholder*, who very well foresaw the Consequences of it, and that also at such a time when the *French* had abandoned all the places which they had taken from them, and when they found themselves supported by their *Allies* and accordingly they found cause to Repent, for scarcely was that unhappy Peace concluded when it was violated by *France*, who immediately fell' upon the *Spanish Netherlands*, and the *Palatinat*, with all manner of Injustice, Violence, Depredations, Military Executions, by Fire and all sorts of Cruelty's: Then they Establisht Soveraign Chambers, or Courts at *Metz*, whereby the Prince and other Members of the Empire were Summond and Despoil'd of their Territories and Soveraignty, under the Pretext of *Dependancies* had *Re-unions*: Complaints hereof were made but to no purpose, and then Conferences were held to Regulate Differences, to which Issued in Converting the *Peace* into a 20 *Years Truce*. Which tho it left the *French* in Possession of *Strasburg* and many other places which they had made themselves Master of in time of profound Peace: Yet it did not stop the Career of their Violence and Usurpations; but on the contrary, it hightned them, until, in fine, they intirely ruin'd their own Protestants, and by the secret League which the *French* King made with King *James*, put himself in a Condition to bring *England* under his Yoke; and Immerse the United Provinces in Irrecoverable Ruine. But the Prince of *Orange* was the Glorious Instrument whom God made use of on this occasion to Ward off the fatal blow, and it is to his Prudence and Valour that the *English* owe their Liberty, and his Elevation to the *Brittish Throne*, did as effectually save *Holland* then, as his Restoration to the Office of *Stadholder* did deliver that Republick before.

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After this deduction of the infamous Method by which the *French* King ſubjected the Princes and States of *Europe*; it is to conceive the Reaſons which obliged thoſe *Powers* to unite themſelves in ſuch a great and mighty League againſt that Crown. It was not meerly for their own Defence, and to prevent their being forthwith enſlaved; nor was it to lay down Arms as ſoon as *France* ſhould propoſe a Peace and promiſe to obſerve the ſame, ſince Experience may teach them that ſhe makes no ſcruple of breaking her Word and Oath; but the Cauſe of their League was to reſtore *Europe* to its former Tranquillity, by reducing *France* to ſuch a Condition, as to render her uncapable of troubling their Quiet any more. Otherwiſe what profit ſhould they have by this Alliance. What fruit ſhould they reap of all the Care they have taken, all the trouble which they have been at, and the vaſt Treaſures which they have expended? Can Perſons of the loweſt degree of Senſe be guilty of ſuch a piece of Conduct; and don't we know that to begin a Work and not bring it to Perfection, is the way to loſe all our Labour? It is certain then that the Allies propos'd to themſelves the continuance of the War until ſuch time as *France* ſhould give ſolid Proof of her Converſion, by a faithful Reſtitution of all that ſhe has uſurp'd ſince the Peace of *Munſter*, and the Treaty of the *Pyrenees*, or be compelled thereunto by an indiſpenſible Neceſſity. Thoſe were the true Motives which prevail'd with the Allies to unite for their own Preſervation: Then let us ſee whether the Reaſons of them be ceaſed, and if the Peace now offer'd by *France* can reſtore the Peace of *Europe*, and ſecure it againſt the horrible Attempts of that Ambitious Crown.

For as to what concerns the *French* King's Deſigns, We need do no more but examine his Conduct, and we ſhall quickly find that they are ſtill the ſame; The Maſter-piece of his Politicks is to re-eſtabliſh his Affairs by Treaties of Peace, which he can break when he pleaſes. Did he not impudently violate that of *Aix la Chappelle*, that of *Nimeguen*, and the Twenty Years Truce, and who can be Guarantee, that he will not alſo break that which he now offers, if we be ſo imprudent as to accept it; Can we truſt his Word? Can we rely upon his Oath or his Fidelity? Does not Experience convince us, that he avowedly breaks the moſt ſacred Ties, that he mocks at all Laws Humane and Divine, and that he deſpiſes Religion, and profanes our Altars? Can Chriſtian Princes put Confidence in a Crown which hath made an Alliance with the *Turk*, ſolicited the Sworn Enemy of Chriſtendom, to break the Truce with the Emperor; and hath ſince furniſhed the Infidels with Men and Mony to carry on their unjuſt Enterprizes?

Let us once, at leaſt, learn to be wiſe at our own Coſt. We found that the Peace of *Nimeguen* ſet *Europe* upon the brink of Deſtruction, unto which ſhe muſt have undoubtedly fallen, had not Heaven it ſelf prevented it. In effect, had it not been for the Wonderful Revolution in *England*, that Kingdom had been ere now at the Devotion of *France*, and *Holland* loſt beyond recovery; and ſeeing it was ſo, I leave it to thoſe who have nothing left them but the very ſhadow of Reaſon to judge what would have been the Deſtiny of the other Princes and States of *Europe*; and if *France* concluded the Peace at *Nimeguen*, that ſhe might the more aſſuredly effectual the Deſtruction of all the Potentates of *Europe*. It is certain, that her deſign in offering Peace now, is only to accompliſh it with the more Facility. This is evident from her Maxims and Conduct. We cannot ſay that ſhe hath ſincerely reſolv'd to change them, ſeeing ſhe mentions nothing of Reſtitution, at leaſt, of that which ſhe is obliged to make, but deſigns to maintain her ſelf in a Condition to renue her Infractions when ſhe pleaſes, or rather when ſhe hath made up the great Expence of her Men and Mony, which her prodigious Efforts have engag'd her in.

But ſuppoſe that *France* means honeſtly at this time, muſt we grant Peace as ſoon as ſhe demands it, and muſt ſhe not give Satisfaction to thoſe Powers upon whom ſhe hath dar'd to commit the moſt cruel and diſgraceful Outrages? She hath treated them all with an unſupportable Pride. The Pope hath felt the Effects of it as well as others, his quality of Head of the Church not being ſufficient to guard him againſt the Inſults of *France*: The Emperor and K. of *Spain*, the Princes and States of the Empire and *Italy*,

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as well as *England* and *Holland* have received Affronts from *France* which cannot be forgotten. Not to insist on it, that in Justice she ought to pay all the Charges of that Vexatious War, in which she hath engaged the Confederates. Hath she not treated Soveraignty it self, with the utmost disdain: what Insolence can be named that is not to be found in the *Devices* and *Inscriptions* which are to be seen at *Paris*, and what Indignity is there with which she hath not Treated, the *Dutch* in the Inscription upon the Gate of *St. Denis*. Those People who are the Principal object of the hatred and malice of *France* are particulary concerned to prevent the Peace, being obliged to oppose it for their own safety, seeing they must unavoidably be the first who fall under the *French* Tyranny, after the dissolution of the Confederacy by this Peace, and then what will become of their Religion, Liberty and Trade, shant they be brought under an Ignominious Slavery deprived of the Liberty of their Consciences, and Subjected to a Tyranny, beyond all that ever was heard of; and can only be represented by that which the *French Protestants* and *New Converts* did, and do groan under, being Slavery, Barbarous, that it hath been condemned by a *Pope*, as it is at this day by all men of honesty, either Papists or Protestants.

It is evident by those reasons which I have alledged, that the *French* King hath neither chang'd his design nor conduct, and that the Peace which he offers to the *Allies*, is only to deceive them after he hath divided them, and to destroy them one after another; but whether he be in Condition to do this, or whether the *Allies* have rendred him incapable of renewing his Infractions, is that which we are now to Examine, to compare then the *French* King now with what he was, when he broke the Treatys of *Aix la Chapelle* and *Nimeguen*: He is much Stronger in one respect, and weaker in another. He is much stronger because he hath extended his Conquests since, and rendred himself Master of many strong places, both in *Flanders* and *Germany*, but he is much weaker because of the Extream Misery which reigns throughout his Kingdom, and the Consumption of his Treasures. If the *Allies* accept the Peace, they have hitherto done nothing, and *France* will remain more Powerful than ever. If on the Contrary they continue the War, they will have the satisfaction to see *France* fall under its own weight. We must then conclude, that in respect of the first, the *French* King instead of being humbled, will reap great Advantage, and that in respect of the Second, he is in such Circumstances that we may justly hope to see him fall of a sudden. He knows this well enough, and being sensible that he will gain all by a Peace, and on the contrary lose all by the Continuation of the War: We must not wonder if he make such pressing Instances to obtain the Former, and Ward off the Latter. This is the Motive which obliges him to make such Prodigious Efforts to draw the *Allies* into Peace, which will be as prejudicial to them as advantagious to him. But what Method shall we take, say some, to oppose the *French Torrent*. *That Crown has every day new advantages, and we the misfortune of considerable losses, if that continue*, France *will still be in a condition to prescribe Laws to us, and we shall at last be constrained to receive Peace on much harder terms than those which are now offered*. This way of Reasoning is a meer illusion. Affairs are not so desperate, nor is it so difficult to put a stop to the Progress of *France*. That Crown hath carried some Places of strength, and occasioned us some Losses at Sea this year, it is true; but the *French* King hath exhausted himself for that end, and he is no more in a Condition to continue the War with that same Vigour. Whereas on the contrary the Allies, who have almost made no Efforts, are still possessed of Resources, whereof *France* has none. So that that there wants nothing but a good-will to obtain what we desire, and if every one do their part, we shall see such Armies on foot next year, as will force our great Enemy to abandon his prize. In fine, there are only two things to chuse, *viz. Slavery* or *Liberty*, if we make Peace, we cannot escape falling into the one, and if we continue the War with Vigor, we shall infallibly preserve the other.

Shall we who are Dutch-men, lose by a Cowardly Imprudence that dear Liberty which our Fathers purchas'd by shedding their Blood with so much Generosity, which the Princes of *Orange* procur'd us by an admirable Valour; and which the King of *Great Britain*, the worthy Representative of that Illustrious Family, Defends still, by exposing his Sacred Person to the greatest of Dangers. It is by his wise Conduct and singular Courage that we have been many times deliver'd from the brink of Destruction; Let's not then be so void of Sense as to put our selves again in danger of falling into it without hopes of Retrieve. Let's Back his Majesty's good Intentions, who always gave us wise Counsels. Let's Generously employ our Estates, our Persons, and our Lives for the preservation of our Religion, our Liberty, our Wives and our Children. We have no occasion to doubt of good Success, provided that we acquit our selves as we ought. Our Cause is just, and that of our Enemy every way Impious. Soon or Late, Heaven will humble his Pride, and we shall enjoy the advantage and Satisfaction of having, by God's assistance, defended that which is most dear, and which we should never abandon but with our Lives.

These Sir, are the Reasons which I had to Communicate to make it evident that a Peace must needs be Fatal to us, I may perhaps enlarge upon them when occasion offers, and also furnish you with new ones. In the mean time I am,

SIR,